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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/556,647	04/24/2000	Mitchell R. Bauer	8778.00	7493
29994	7590	12/17/2002		
DOUGLAS S. FOOTE NRC CORPORATION 1700 S. PATTERSON BLVD. WHQSE DAYTON, OH 45479			EXAMINER FISCHER, ANDREW J	
			ART UNIT 3627	PAPER NUMBER

DATE MAILED: 12/17/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

## Office Action Summary

Application No.  
09/556,647

Applicant(s)

Mitchell R. Bauer

Examiner

Andrew J. Fischer

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 1 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136 (a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

### Status

1)  Responsive to communication(s) filed on Oct 21, 2002

2a)  This action is FINAL.      2b)  This action is non-final.

3)  Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

### Disposition of Claims

4)  Claim(s) 1-30 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above, claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)  Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.

6)  Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are rejected.

7)  Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.

8)  Claims 1-30 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

### Application Papers

9)  The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)  The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are a)  accepted or b)  objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

11)  The proposed drawing correction filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is: a)  approved b)  disapproved by the Examiner.

If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.

12)  The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

### Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

13)  Acknowledgement is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a)  All b)  Some\* c)  None of:

1.  Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.  Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.

3.  Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\*See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

14)  Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e).

a)  The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

15)  Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

### Attachment(s)

1)  Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

4)  Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). \_\_\_\_\_

2)  Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

5)  Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)

3)  Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s). \_\_\_\_\_

6)  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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***Restriction***

1. Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:
  - I. Claims 1-7, drawn to a computerized method, classified in class 705, subclass 26.
  - II. Claims 8-14, drawn to a computer system, classified in class 709, subclass 200.
  - III. Claims 15-21, drawn to a method of selecting a raw material, classified in class 700, subclass 117.
  - IV. Claims 22-30, drawn to an apparatus, classified in class 700, subclass 117. *selected*

2. The inventions are distinct, each from the other because of the following reasons:

Inventions I and II are related as process and apparatus for its practice. The inventions are distinct if it can be shown that either: (1) the process as claimed can be practiced by another materially different apparatus or by hand, or (2) the apparatus as claimed can be used to practice another and materially different process. (MPEP § 806.05(e)). In this case, the apparatus can be practiced with a materially different process, one that would include querying the user for seller input.

3. The Examiner previously stated that if Applicant argues the groups separately, a restriction will follow.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See the previous Office Action on the merits mailed August 2, 2002 (Paper No. 5), Paragraph No. 15 which states: "It is the Examiner's position that the 2 groups of claims (i.e. independent claims 1 and 8 along with their respective dependent claims) are not patentably distinct from each other. If Applicant amends the claims so that the groups are patentably distinct or argues the groups separately, a restriction between the 2 groups will follow."

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The Examiner notes Applicant has specifically argued the functional features in his method claims must be given "due weight . . ."<sup>2</sup> Because functional features in product claims are not necessarily given due weight,<sup>3</sup> Applicant has inherently argued the separate patentability of the groups and therefore that the groups are patentably distinct.

4. Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above, because an additional search required for Group I is not necessarily required for Group II, and because the inventions have acquired a separate status in the art because of their recognized divergent subject matter, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

5. Inventions I and III are related as subcombinations disclosed as usable together in a single combination. The subcombinations are distinct from each other if they are shown to be separately usable. In the instant case, invention III has separate utility such as a market research tool determining which raw materials particular people might be interested in purchasing. See MPEP § 806.05(d).

6. Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above, because an additional search required for Group I is not necessarily required for Group III, and because the inventions have acquired a separate status in the art because of their recognized divergent subject matter, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

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<sup>2</sup> Applicant's Remarks filed October 21, 2002 (Paper No. 8), page 17, line 1.

<sup>3</sup> Claims directed to apparatus must be distinguished from the prior art in terms of structure rather than function. See *In re Danly*, 263 F.2d 844, 847, 120 USPQ 528, 531 (CCPA 1959).

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7. Inventions I and IV are related as process and apparatus for its practice. The inventions are distinct if it can be shown that either: (1) the process as claimed can be practiced by another materially different apparatus or by hand, or (2) the apparatus as claimed can be used to practice another and materially different process. (MPEP § 806.05(e)). In this case, the process can be practiced by a materially different apparatus—one that does not require the equivalent of the corresponding structure of the means for populating.

8. Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above, because an additional search required for Group I is not necessarily required for Group IV, and because the inventions have acquired a separate status in the art because of their recognized divergent subject matter, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

9. Inventions II and III are related as process and apparatus for its practice. The inventions are distinct if it can be shown that either: (1) the process as claimed can be practiced by another materially different apparatus or by hand, or (2) the apparatus as claimed can be used to practice another and materially different process. (MPEP § 806.05(e)). In this case, the process can be practiced by hand using index cards and a pencil.

10. Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above, because the search required for Group II is not required for Group III, and because the inventions have acquired a separate status in the art because of their recognized divergent subject matter, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

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11. Inventions II and IV are related as combination and subcombination. Inventions in this relationship are distinct if it can be shown that (1) the combination as claimed does not require the particulars of the subcombination as claimed for patentability, and (2) that the subcombination has utility by itself or in other combinations (MPEP § 806.05(c)). In the instant case, the combination as claimed does not require the particulars of the subcombination as claimed because the combination does not require the equivalents of the corresponding structure of the means for populating. The subcombination has separate utility such as a generic personal computer. Additionally, the generic personal computers could be used to keep a list of available raw materials that are purchasable readily on hand.

12. Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above, because the search required for Group II is not required for Group IV, and because the inventions have acquired a separate status in the art because of their recognized divergent subject matter, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

13. Inventions III and IV are related as process and apparatus for its practice. The inventions are distinct if it can be shown that either: (1) the process as claimed can be practiced by another materially different apparatus or by hand, or (2) the apparatus as claimed can be used to practice another and materially different process. (MPEP § 806.05(e)). In this case, the method could be performed by hand using index cards and a pencil.

14. Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above, because the search required for Group III is not required for Group IV, and because the inventions have acquired a

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separate status in the art because of their recognized divergent subject matter, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

15. A telephone call was made to Francis L. Conte on or before October 31, 2002 to request an oral election to the above restriction requirement, but did not result in an election being made. Mr. Conti indicated that a written restriction was desired.

16. Applicant is advised that the reply to this requirement to be complete must include an election of the invention to be examined even though the requirement be traversed (37 CFR 1.143).

17. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Andrew J. Fischer whose telephone number is (703) 305-0292.

*AJFischer 12/15/02*  
ANDREW J. FISCHER  
PATENT EXAMINER

AJF  
December 15, 2002